

HUMAN EVENTS
22 December 1984

Human Events from 1944 to 1984

On Feb. 2, 1944, the first regular weekly issue of HUMAN EVENTS made the light of day, and HUMAN EVENTS has not stopped publishing since. The core of the issue was built around a crisply reasoned essay written by prominent historian and journalist William Henry Chamberlin, titled, "Stalin, *Pravda* and Churchill" (see page 20).

A former Moscow correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor*, Chamberlin was right on the button about Soviet perfidy, even at this early date. When so many of America's intellectuals and policymakers were still infatuated with communism.

He accurately depicted Stalin's cold and cruel character, noting that even Lenin had deeply distrusted him. He recounted how Stalin, feeling his oats during the war, had turned the British away from supporting in Yugoslavia "the Monarchist General Mikhailovitch" to backing "the Communist Marshal Broz [Tito]."

He showed how Stalin was eager to devour Poland, accusing the ruler of Russia of "treating Poland like a vassal state." Stalin, he noted, "is riding high in this period of Russian military success. Laying plans for dependent regimes in Poland, the Baltic and Balkan states" is, he allowed, just "one of his minor preoccupations."

Chamberlin, and by extension HUMAN EVENTS, can be considered remarkably prescient about the growing danger the Soviet Union posed to the West in this era of an earlier "detente," when the U.S. and the USSR were supposed to be bosom allies in the war against Nazi Germany.

This insight into the nature of the Soviet Union, an insight reflected in many other significant articles, must be considered one of the paper's important contributions to history, for there were fewer than a handful of publications in this time period that accurately portrayed the aggressive impulses of the Kremlin.

HUMAN EVENTS came off the press sharply challenging the "Soviets are sweet" policy pursued by FDR and his State Department, but within a few years it had also developed a reputation as a more broadly based conservative weekly. It was not only known for its vigorous anti-Communist views, but its pro-free enterprise positions, its sharp attacks on the growing power of organized labor, its skepticism of the United Nations, its abhorrence of the Socialist turn of the Democratic party, and its adamant opposition to the federal funding of the welfare state and increasing federal intervention in state and local affairs.

That HUMAN EVENTS would become a flagship for conservatives was not evident from the background and early inclinations of its founders. The moving spirit behind HUMAN EVENTS, Frank Hanighen, was a native of Nebraska and a graduate of Harvard in the 1920s.

A tall, impressive-looking man, he co-authored a book called *Merchants of Death* in the early 1930s, which lambasted the American munitions industry and took several swipes at the capitalist system. There was even a fuzzy-minded pitch for world government in the book, and it was a work that Hanighen himself did not boast of in his later years. Hanighen was associated with a number of other liberal causes as well.

He had also been a foreign correspondent for the old New York *Evening Post* and the New York *Times* in the 1930s, and held down a similar position for the *Reader's Digest* during the early years of World War II.

In 1954, Hanighen asked Jim Wick to come to Washington to become executive publisher of HUMAN EVENTS. Because Hanighen had become concerned over his health — he had developed signs of high blood pressure — he and Wick worked out an arrangement in which Wick would control HUMAN EVENTS should anything happen to Hanighen.

Wick's background itself is interesting. Born in Bowdle, S.D., on May 11, 1897 — he was two years older than Hanighen — he embarked on a lifelong career in the newspaper field shortly after graduating *cum laude* from the University of Minnesota in 1925.

Aside from owning with his brother Milton a number of small-town newspapers, Wick had been editor of a prominent Prentice-Hall newsletter, had been active in Republican politics (he was on Gov. Thomas Dewey's 1944 presidential research staff) and had even been enterprising enough to obtain an interview by cable with Joseph Stalin in 1952.

Wick arrived at HUMAN EVENTS in 1955 and, under his influence HUMAN EVENTS became even more activist, and through his promotional techniques, he eventually lifted the publication's circulation to over 100,000, although much of this was "soft" circulation that had been run up on "dollar trial" subscriptions and other promotional gimmicks.

Under Wick, HUMAN EVENTS held semi-annual political action conferences in 1961-63 and ran a summer journalism school. He expanded the size of HUMAN EVENTS in 1963, turning it from a newsletter into a 16-page tabloid that featured syndicated columns and focused on political races.

Both Hanighen and Wick died in 1964, and HUMAN EVENTS was then temporarily run by Jim Wick's brother, Milton. In 1966, with an assist from now CIA Director William Casey, Tom Winter, the editor, Allan Ryskind, the Capitol Hill Editor, and Robert Kephart, the Publisher, purchased HUMAN EVENTS from the Wick estate.

The hard-working Managing Editor, Robert F. Latham, joined the organization in 1963, having previously served with the Central Intelligence Agency from 1947 until his employment at HUMAN EVENTS. Latham, who arrives in his office at 6 a.m. every workday, has a host of duties, including responsibility for laying out the issue, proofreading, contacting authors and cleaning up mistakes on the copy. Without his daily presence, the issue would never get out on time.